

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 5989

1. AS WE PREDICTED YESTERDAY (REFTEL), MOST NEW DELHI PAPERS REPORTED TODAY (APRIL 18) THE NRC'S APPROVAL OF TEN LICENSES TO EXPORT ENRICHED URANIUM TO SEVERAL WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES JUST ONE DAY BEFORE THE CUTOFF DATE SET BY THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION ACT FOR SUCH EXPORTS. SOME ACCOUNTS OBSERVED THAT INDIA'S APPLICATION WAS STILL LANGUISHING BEFORE THE NRC, AND CITED THIS AS EVIDENCE THAT THE US PURSUES A DOUBLE STANDARD IN ENFORCING ITS NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY.

2. N.C. MENON, WRITING IN THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES," NOTES THAT THE VERY DAY THE EUROPEAN LICENSES WERE APPROVED, THE NRC CANCELLED A MEETING TO DISCUSS THE TARAPUR LICENSE. HE CONCLUDES THAT "SUCH DIFFICULTIES AS ADMINISTRATIVE OR SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES AND LACK
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OF A QUORUM -- THE OSTENSIBLE REASONS GIVEN FOR CANCELLATION OF NRC MEETINGS ABOUT THE TARAPUR FUEL -- DO NOT REALLY APPLY WHEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE NRC ARE IN A HURRY TO HAND OUT FUEL." HE DRAWS A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN ARGUMENT THAT AN ACT OF CONGRESS CANNOT CANCEL THE EURATOM FUEL SUPPLY AGREEMENT AND INDIA'S CASE FOR TARAPUR FUEL. MENON

COMMENTS THAT WHILE THE EUROPEANS "DO NOT HESITATE TO THUMB THEIR NOSES AT WASHINGTON IN A MATTER OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, SOME INDIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THOSE AT THE HIGHEST DIPLOMATIC LEVEL IN THE US, CONTINUE WITH IRRATIONAL ABANDON TO MISLEAD ALL AND SUNDRY BY REPEATED STATEMENTS ABOUT US READINESS TO SUPPLY THE TARAPUR FUEL WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED."

3. IN A RELATED ARTICLE, WELL-KNOWN COLUMNIST N.J. NANPORIA, IN THE APRIL 18 "HINDUSTAN TIMES," WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. THEIR ACCEPTANCE IN HIS VIEW WOULD BE AT THE COST OF SURRENDERING ALL THAT THE PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR POWER CAN OFFER." NANPORIA ALSO QUESTIONS THE GOI'S RENUNCIATIONS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE PNE. HE DISMISSES "THE PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL BAN ON THE PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS MATERIAL SINCE THIS WILL BE SEEN AS A MANOEUVRE BY THE NUCLEAR POWERS TO WITHHOLD PLUTONIUM AND ENRICHED URANIUM FROM WOULD-BE SMALLER NUCLEAR POWERS, AND WILL BE REJECTED AS SUCH." NANPORIA THINKS THAT "THE ATTITUDE OF THE US NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION OFFERS A MORE DEPENDABLE CLUE TO AMERICAN POLICIES THAN THE US GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC ASSURANCES."
GOHEEN

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